

5-15 Auburn Street (ca. 1860-61)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981*:



5- 15 Auburn Street

2015

Numbers 5-15 Auburn Street is a group of six red brick, flat front Italianate town houses with low granite basements and three bay main facades. Projecting cast iron (?) Cornices have closely spaced brackets.

Short flights of steps lead to front doors in recessed entrances. Wood paneling lines the walls of the entrance areas. The windows have simple brownstone sills and lintels and mostly 1/1 wooden sash.

Builder: Charles W Wellington

Original owner: Charles W Wellington

Numbers 5-15 Auburn Street is a solid, well-crafted example of early 1860s Charlestown row house architecture. This group is integral to the essentially unspoiled mid-19th century character of Auburn Street. Its granite basements attest to the lingering influence of the Greek Revival style, while its bracketed cornices place these houses squarely within the Italianate style.

This group is the work of prolific mid 19th century Charlestown builder, Charles W Wellington. He was active in local building trades from circa 1845-circa 1875. In 1845 he is listed as a carpenter (no home address). During the 1850s and early 1860s he worked as a carpenter and resided at 2 Irving Place. By the late 1860s he was a carpenter with business at 6 Mill Street. By that time he was living in Cambridge. In 1874 he worked at 151 Medford St. and continued to live in Cambridge. He is not listed in the 1880 Boston directory.

In addition to 5-15 Auburn, examples of Wellington's work include other groups of row houses on Auburn Street such as 17-21 and 1-3. He probably provided stairs, flooring, window

sash, etc. for the Italianate red brick row houses at 46-60 Baldwin Street.



Evidently, Wellington purchased 5-15's lots from Seth Barker of Hanover, Massachusetts and Elizabeth J Willis of Newburyport (see Middlesex 841:332, October 23, 1860). Buildings are first mentioned in a deed associated with number 15, dated April 17, 1861. At that time Charles W Wellington, sold 15 Auburn St. to James McCormack of Boston, a trader, for \$3800. McCormick's purchase encompassed "a lot of land with the brick dwelling house" (see 851:207). During the 1860s, 15 was sold back and forth between Orrin Hamilton, of Charlestown, a conductor, and James McCormick of Roxbury (see 981:410).

By 1875 this groups owners included George H Simonds-5, E Coffin-4, Holmer Block, Boston-7, Charles Curtis, a baker, 356 and 490 Main Street and 103 Bunker Hill Street-9, A O Smith, occupation unlisted- 11, S P Smith, no occupation-13, and Lizzie A Hamilton-15.

By 1901 this group's owners included George H Simonds' heirs-5, Bridget Finnigan-7, Thomas Weir-9, Albert O Smith-11, John Harvey-13 and F J Howard-15.

Auburn Street was originally called Hall Street, evidently as a cul-de-sac extending as far as number 40. Hall Street may have been set out as early as the 1810s. Housing development of the street occurred mostly in circa the late 1850s-1860s.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1851

Atlases-1845, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown Directories- 1834- 1874

Middlesex Deeds- 151:207, 981, 410

*Digitized and edited, without change in content, from the scanned record in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, and with addition of current photographs. In the case of houses that have been altered since the survey, these photographs may not entirely correspond to the architectural description. If earlier photographs of suitable quality are available, these have been included.

R. Dinsmore